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SIPDIS

DEPT FOR ISN/WDMT AND PM/ISO/PMAT (24/7)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/16/2019  
TAGS: [KCRM](#) [KNNP](#) [ASEC](#) [PARM](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#)  
SUBJECT: RESPONDING TO REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE IN  
IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL NUCLEAR MATERIAL

REF: SECSTATE 71188

Classified By: CDA JoAnne Wagner for reasons 1.4 (b)(d)

¶1. (S/NF) Post concurs with reftel conclusion that the purported nuclear material in Bujumbura is likely a hoax. Despite this, due diligence demands the material be tested, and Post believes this is a good opportunity for cooperation with the Burundian government. Note that Post wishes to work with the Burundian government as a whole, not exclusively with the intelligence service, on this issue.

¶2. (S/NF) In response to the questions posed in the reference, Post has prepared the following answers. Post notes several conflicts and inconsistencies in the story surrounding the item as related to the DATT :

Q: Washington is looking into the possibility of an RSO in a neighboring country providing a radiation detection pager and radiation identifier to the Defense Attach in Bujumbura; DIA would provide procedures for use of the equipment. In the event that Post is unable to locate a radiation detector in USG custody in Bujumbura, are other avenues available to obtain this equipment, such as requesting assistance from allied embassies?

A: An RID is available from Nairobi; however, the DoD's DTK-1 Technical Collection Division is unsure of the proper calibration of the device and prefers to send a team of specialists; Post concurs.

Q: Could Burundian authorities confirm the veracity of reports of health hazards caused by the material?

A: The Burundians confirmed that there have been no known health issues related to the object. In fact, none of the deaths related in the anecdotal history of the container appear to be explicitly linked to the object.

Q: Is it possible to identify the "local citizen" who provided the material to the host government? A name could provide some insight on if/how this case could be related to previous cases that involved similar containers and documents.

A: The Burundian intelligence services named the source as Ose'e RUSINGIZWA.

Q: Does the host government plan to store or dispose of the container?

A: Gilbert BULANJE of the Burundian intelligence service reiterated that the Government of Burundi would prefer that the U.S. dispose of the item regardless of its nature. Post concurs, judging that even if the item is not any type of radioactive material, it is best to take it out of circulation to avoid having it resurface as part of some future hoax.

Q: How long has the host government been in possession of the container?

A: Reportedly 2 or 3 weeks.

Q: Who in the DRC provided the material to the businessman (seller)?

A: BULANJE related RUSINGIZWA's statement that he personally removed the item from a residence belonging to former President Mobutu of Zaire (DRC). Post notes the conflict in this story with the item's anecdotal history of being passed from owner to owner.

Q: Who provided the documents to the businessman?

A: BULANJE said RUSINGIZWA claimed that he retrieved both the documents and the canister at the same time from the Mobutu residence. Post notes the documents purported to be from Uganda are dated 2003, approximately six years after Mobutu fled the DRC.

Q: What extremist associations do the businessman or his associates have?

A: BULANJE stated that RUSINGWIZA had no such known associations. Post is passing the name to other agencies for further checks.

Q: Who has the businessman tried to sell the materials to?

A: BULANJE stated RUSINGWIZA made initial contact with a low-level intelligence contact, asking the contact to act on his behalf with the Intelligence Service. Intelligence officials ultimately insisted RUSINGWIZA be questioned by BULANJE's office.

13. (S/NF) The DATT continues to work with the DoD's DTK-1 Technical Collection Division in order to provide a team of two specialists by the end of the month to test and arrange for appropriate disposal or immediate destruction of the item. Post supports this approach, as it provides a definitive answer to the item's status and decisively removes either dangerous material or another hoax canister from circulation.

14. (SBU) Action officer for this issue remains Defense Attache LTCOL Thomas L. Miller, IVG 472-7311.  
Wagner